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- fice of the American Representative, Franco-American War Affairs Commission, Elysée Palace, Paris, France. (Dec., 1918.)
- SHELTON, Alfred C., Second Lieutenant, Sanitary Corps, Camp Crane, Pa. (Jan., 1919.) Discharged.
- SILLIMAN, Edmund, Naval Reserve. (Feb., 1919.)
- SMITH, Allyn G., Second Lieutenant, Air Service, Instructor, Radio Officers' Training School, Columbia University, New York City. (Dec., 1918.)
- STIVERS, Dr. C. G., Captain, Medical Corps, Air Service, San Francisco. (Dec., 1918.)
- STODDARD, H. L., Sergeant, Co. B, 311th Ammunition Train, A. E. F., France. (Dec., 1918.)
- STORER, Tracy I., First Lieutenant, Sanitary Corps, Laboratory Car 'Metchnikoff,' Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. (Jan., 1919.) Discharged.
- SWEENEY, J. A., Private, Co. E, 2d Battalion, 20th Engineers (Forest), A. E. F., France. (Auk, Jan., 1919.)
- TYLER, Dr. Winsor M., Captain, Medical Corps, Ft. Adams, R. I. (Auk, Jan., 1919.)
- UFFORD, Elmer D., A. E. F. (Feb., 1919.)
- VAN ROSSEM, Adriaan, First Lieutenant, Machine Gun School, Camp Hancock, Ga. (Dec., 1918.)
- WALKER, Alex., Battery A., 45th Regiment, Coast Artillery Corps, A. E. F., France. Dec., 1918.)
- WOOD, Casey A., Lieutenant Colonel, Medical Corps, Staff of Surgeon General, Washington, D. C. (Dec., 1918.) Entered service, June, 1917. Earlier, in charge of Examining Unit, Chicago, Ill., and then Chief of Head Survey, Camp Sherman, Ohio. Recently, Acting-Director of Board on Medical and Surgical History of the War. (Dec., 1918.)
- WRIGHT, Howard, Navy.
- YOUNG, John P., Major, Camp Dix, N. J.

### COMMUNICATION

#### TRINOMIALS AND CURRENT PRACTICE

Editor THE CONDOR:

It seems to me that various points brought up by Swarth in his review (CONDOR, XX, 1918, pp. 141-142) of Taverner's papers in the "Summary Report of the Geological Survey, Department of Mines, for the Calendar Year 1916" (Ottawa, Canada), and Mr. Taverner's reply to the same (*ibid.*, pp. 213-216), are worthy of further discussion. There have been several innovations in ornithological practice during the past year, and at least the main points of these merit careful consideration by American ornithologists.

For bird papers of a strictly "popular"

style, the method of procedure adopted by Mr. Taverner in his articles could be used with gratifying results. This class of literature is increasing in quantity and popularity, and for such, the purely trinomial nomenclature is admittedly cumbersome and confusing to many readers. How much better would it be for authors uniformly to use the binomial for the Latin, and the specific name for its English equivalent, instead of the name of the eastern race as is commonly employed in such case. For entirely scientific, and what I may term popular-scientific work, however, the old system seems better, although it is far from ideal.

Mr. Taverner says that the plan which he has followed "discourages the unconsidered copying of names and encourages original research". In future years, however, when gathering published information for a report on some general region, another author cannot personally verify all binomial records and identify all the specimens referred to. In fact, if this binomial system were in general use, it would be almost impossible for anyone to prepare an authoritative report on a region, because of this difficulty of using previously published information. Even though Mr. Taverner does make trinomial notations at other points in his papers, that does not alter the general complexion of the matter, for an article which is both binomial and trinomial in nomenclature has the faults of both systems and the advantages of neither.

I think that the majority will agree with Swarth that "the value of such a list lies largely in the exact subspecific determination of the various forms at the points at which the specimens are taken"—*all* of the forms, and not just those which the author deems worthy of special notation. Unless some contributions to the habits and life histories of birds are given also, that is its *only* value, as I see it. Although in the vast majority of lists, specimens of all subspecies mentioned have not been secured, one who is familiar with his locality can be reasonably certain of identities, usually, and if he is not, he should, and often does, indicate his uncertainty. To an expert in geographical distribution, the binomial name possibly conveys all that is necessary, but the average reader and bird student wants to know the *probable* form encountered, and will almost never bother to search out its logical identity.

I heartily agree that too many articles are "thrown together" without the proper

determination of material, but this is the fault of individuals and not of the system. Also it is true that subspecific designation is only a part of ornithology, and not its end, but it is a very important part, and although current usages are far from perfect, we should be very careful not even partially to adopt others that would prove less so.

While I am writing this, I wish strongly to protest, though probably in vain, against the indoor sport taken up by many quasi-ornithologists of condemning, without any consideration whatever, every new subspecies which is described. If, after careful comparison of typical material, one who is reasonably familiar with his bird decides that the form in question is untenable, I have nothing to say, for I "live in a glass house" and there are many forms which I think unwarranted. However, the style now seems to be for many who know little about birds, to throw up their hands in horror at every new thing described, without ever having seen a skin of that form. Even if material has been examined and no differences noted, the amateur or semi-amateur must remember that, in the first place, his skins may be intergrades, and in the second, that he may be unable to recognize differences which to a trained specialist may be perfectly apparent. And so, even if there appear to be entirely adequate grounds for objections, one should be careful to keep from joining in any of Osgood's classical "dribbling protests."—A. B. HOWELL, *Covina, California, December 26, 1918.*

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

THE GAME BIRDS OF CALIFORNIA | Contribution from the University of California | Museum of Vertebrate Zoology | By | JOSEPH GRINNELL | HAROLD CHILD BRYANT | and | TRACY IRWIN STORER | University of California Press | Berkeley | 1918. Large 8vo, pp. x+642, 16 colored pls., 94 figs. in text, 1 table inserted; issued December 28, 1918. Cloth, \$6.00, net.

The need of a work such as this has been too real to require further comment after the deficiency has been so adequately met. The Game Birds of California will win immediate approval. From the dark blue, gold-lettered cover and excellent colored plates to the dull surfaced paper and beautiful typography it is consistently an admirable book. And if this praise of externals seems unduly to extoll a less important feature, let the reviewer confess himself a lover of at-

tractive books and remind the reader that in good society, science well-dressed is not without appreciation, and even praise.

To one who knows all three authors, they seem a very happy combination of craftsmen. Certainly the finished product has justified Doctor Grinnell's prefatory statement—"namely that the highest plane of scientific output can be accomplished only through coöperative effort. . . . Where one author working alone would make mistakes unawares, two, or better, three, are able to check one another's output to advantage. The best results, always granting mutually sympathetic interest, will follow organized coöperative toil."

We learn from the introduction that "In preparing the present volume the authors have attempted to meet the requirements of a varied public. The hunter wishes information concerning the haunts and the habits of our game birds; the naturalist wishes to have the completest possible data regarding their life histories; the legislator who appreciates the necessity of judicious game laws wishes to have the facts that are relevant to his purpose presented in concise form; and the conservationist desires that information which will assist him in his efforts to perpetuate our bird life for the ultimate benefit of the greatest number of people. Whether the needs of these various classes have been adequately met in the following pages remains to be proved, but it may at least be stated here that none of them has been overlooked. To each of the four categories of persons above mentioned, this book is offered as a working manual." It seems to the reviewer that the authors have lived up to the task which they set for themselves.

One of the underlying incentives for the publication of *The Game Birds of California* was found in the decrease of many species of game birds and the seeming indifference of the public toward instituting rational measures to conserve them. The book adequately treats of the means to be taken to conserve game and makes practical recommendations suited to each species.

Introductory chapters are devoted to general subjects, as follows: Decrease of Game and its Causes; Natural Enemies of Game Birds; The Gun Club in California; History of Attempts to Introduce Non-native Game Birds; The Propagation of Game Birds; Legislation Relating to Game Birds in California. The sportsman and nature lover will find much of immediate utility in these general chapters.